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Honest Commoner's SPEECH.

WHere the King ends his *Speech*,
I will begin mine. Since his
Majesty himself tells us, *That we have
such an opportunity now to settle the
future Quiet and Prosperity of these
Kingdoms, and all Europe, as we can
never hope to see again*: We ought, I
think, to believe him, and apply it
the best we can to a common Safety.
Give me leave therefore to say and
press you, by all that is dear to you;
your Liberties, your Honour, your
Posterity, that having but one throw
more for your Lives, for your All;
you trifle not, you mistake not, you
misuse not this opportunity. *Charity
begins at home*; it is a sensible Pro-
verb, and never more seasonable; and
to instruct our selves the best we can,
allow me to look back a little into for-
mer Reigns.

The struggle that has been in these
Kingdoms, since the latter end of
King *James* the First's Time, between
the Court and Countrey Party, can-
not, I am sure it ought not, to be
unknown to any Member that has
the Honour of Sitting in Parliament;
for nothing is more instructive and
Accomplishing to the Persons that
compose it. We shall find an endea-
vour in the Court to grow upon the
Rights and Priviledges of the People,
and a most flattering Clergy ever rea-
dy to stamp all these Attempts, under
the Banner of *Prerogative*, with their
Jure Divino. I will not run into their
History, that of the *Star-Chamber*
shall prevent me; to be had at every
Book-sellers; there cannot be a
worse, nor a truer. It leads me to
pity Kings, and excuse them, for
their Errors of their Government are

rarely their own, they see and hear
by other Mens Eyes and Ears; and as
they are interested, Kings are abused,
and Royal Authority dishonourably
employ'd. It has been the Endeavour
as well as Duty of the Sovereign Coun-
sel of this Kingdom to give a check
to these Abuses, by representing free-
ly to their Kings the Law, the Consti-
tutions, what they may and may not
do, what is his, and what is theirs,
their Consistency and Dependency,
and the dangerous Consequence of
their adhering to such Counsels, and
persisting in those Courses. And to
the Honour of the Constitution, and
Wisdom of our Parliaments, be it spo-
ken, those Kings have left the fairest
Characters to their Names, that have
lived best with their Parliaments;
and you will find that they have been
the ablest and valiantest of our Prin-
ces, that have seen them ofteneft and
followed their Advice most; but
Three great opportunities we have
lost, which I will but hint at, that
you may increase your Zeal, by re-
membering them to improve this only
one that is left us, by which to re-
trieve the loss of them, and save all.

The First was the Concessions of
King *Charles* I. to the 19 Propositi-
ons presented to him in the *Iffe of
Wight*, by the Parliament, 1647.
which the K. himself assures us were
not the Constraint, but Illumination
of his Afflictions; for after a series of
Successes against him, the Houses only
prayed their antient Rights of him,
that though Personally in their Pow-
er, they desired ever to be under his
legal Authority, and abhorred to be
thought to have their King at their
A Mercy,

Mercy, but that they only redeemed him from the ill Counsel of Merciless and Mercenary Men. This opportunity was lost by the interruption of their own victorious Army, which influenced by a few superiour Officers, that sound not their Account by the Peace, had always the Means and Methods to discontent their Followers against their Masters, and so turned their Swords upon those that paid them, and from that time fought for their Leaders, rather than their Countrey; though in this the Men were possibly out-witted and abused. The ill Consequences of this Oversight, or rather Violence, were many and terrible. First, That King's Tragical Death, not only a Dishonour to the Nation, but a beheading of the Government; a preposterous disabling of the Constitution, as well as an unlawful Action. Secondly, From this sprung new Wars with *Scotland*, and all over this Kingdom, in *Kent*, *Essex*, *Wales*, and *Lancashire*, especially at *Dunbar*, *Preston*, and *Worcester*; and though the Veins that were opened a fresh upon this sad occasion, bled freely and largely every where, and put all parts of the Kingdom into Mourning, more perishing in two Years of this second Civil War, than in the seven Years of the first; yet the fatale part of the Business, was the Banishment of the young Princes; for when they were compelled to seek their Bread among Strangers, they learned their Customs, and suck'd in, with foreign Air, outlandish Principles; and this naturally led them to dislike the Government, as well as the People of their own Countrey; which very consideration has sometimes obliged me to make allowances in my own Reflections, upon the Conduct of the Brothers, who perhaps were more Unhappy than Faulty, and much of that owing to us our selves. I will close this Remark with saying,

We had saved our King, our Allegiance, our Honour, our Blood, and Treasure, and a better Thing, our Government, if we had improved that *Use of Might* opportunity. But some will say this was not the Act of the Kingdom, but of a few ambitious Men, true; but the Consequences were as bad; and for that Reason let us have a care of *Victorious Armies*, and their *Ambitious Leaders*, while they are in our Power; there is, at least, that Instruction in it. But our next Instance shall be of an opportunity as extravagantly lost, and with a sort of universal Neglect, if not Consent; and that was the Restauration of his Son King *Charles II.* For he that would have Married *Lambert's* Daughter, and returned upon almost Republican Principles, would certainly have thought it Duty and Religion to have submitted to, and performed his Royal Father's Commissions to the Privileges of the People, and Power of Parliaments; but this opportunity was slept too; our Extreams were so great in Love and Hatred, that we could not find in our Hearts to observe any mean for the real Good of Prince and People: We would be Debauch'd in spight to the preciseness of the Party we hated, and the King should return unconditional, that we might be even with them for their Unmonarchical Principles. It was Rebellion now to fight by his Authority against his Person, and Treason to distinguish his politick from his personal Capacity; and Parliaments themselves might be Disloyal, for we were told, *That our Kings being Sovereigns, they had no Superiour but God; and their People, neither Collectively, nor Representatively, could so much as put the least Restraint upon the Person of their King, and that such Attempts were Treason within the 25 Ed. 3. and much more to alter the antient Frame of the Government.* But about 66
being

being awakened out of our excesses of Joy and Revenge, by the nature of Things, we repented too late; and after 78 we would have given half our Estates, and as much of our Blood too, for such an opportunity as what we had so prodigally and irrecoverably lost.

This false Step we hop'd to retrieve by the Bill of *Exclusion*, but that became Abortive, as it deserved; for it was purely Personal in its Regards, loving one Man more than Liberty, and hating another Man more than Slavery; and miserable is that People, whose Security is more from the Temper of the Magistrate, than the Constitution of the Government. The next greatest opportunity of all, was at the *Election* of this King. He seems not to have come for a Crown, but our Safety; to secure the Succession, rather than obtain the Possession: Doubtless we surpris'd him with the tender of it, and as one unable to resist our Love, after he had overcome our Fears, he submitted to the *Burden of a Crown*, to preserve what he had procur'd for us; *A Deliverance from our Jealousies of Popery and a despotick Power*. To do what we should have done in those former Occasions, had been to save us indeed; but we lost our Memory now in our Joys, as we had done before; I will not say our Wits, and less our Morals; but that we should miss of the best part of the End of our sending for him, and his coming, has something in it so reproachful to our Understandings or Integrity, that it is never to be wip'd off, but by improving this opportunity now in our Hands, and which the King tells us is like to be the last: And since it may be the last time also that I may have the Honour of speaking to you, at least so solemnly, give me leave to use all the freedom of an English Man, and take every Thing in good Part, as it is meant in the greatest

good Will; for whatever be the success, I shall have the satisfaction of having clear'd my Conscience; that if the Authors of our Safety come hereafter to prove the means of our Destruction, the World and Posterity shall know I had no hand in the Tragedy.

That which I call the present opportunity, is taking the advantage of the necessity of Affairs, to settle the Government upon its true Basis, and supply whatever we find Defective. If this yet wants an Explanation, then, I say, *Let us not give a Penny of Money till we are safe at home*; let us be out of Danger from being the worse for Victory; let us know what is ours, how we shall keep it, and what we have in future to trust to. As the K. tells us, *We must sink under the great Power of France*, if, in this Session, we make not Provision for a vigorous Opposition to France; so I tell you, unless you secure your selves against the very successes you hope for, your Provisions may be the Means of your own Ruine instead of Safety. The King is a Stranger to our Constitution, and was nearer to the Crown in Blood, than to our Government in his Education. He is very able in Military Affairs, and the Civil too, of the Place he took his Breeding in, and has better knowledge in foreign Affairs than we have; but in English Business it's no Dishonour to him to be told his Relation to us, the Nature of it, and what is fit for him to do; And who should, or who can do it with that Freedom and Authority, that we may and ought to do? And the rather, because we see how much he is influenced by ill or weak Men, that are the mere Creatures of Power; some stained in their Credit, or Beggars; others Covetous, and that have second Broods to provide for; some Voluptuous and Prodigal; a vast Number of *Foreigners*, that wait both for Fortunes and Title upon the con-

clusion of this War; enough to move a Conquerour to ask or take more Power, than is for the safety of our Constitution to suffer. I cannot forget that I have read *Cæsar's* Story; what he did with his victorious Army when he returned home, and have seen something to the same purpose in our own Countrey. The World has very few *Solons*, *Dyons*, and *Scipios* in it; and to be very free with you, as the Time and Case obliges me, there are some Passages, I have observed, since the Revolution with no little regret; the Employment of unpopular and ungrateful Men; the laying by the most zealous Men in the Change, and as able as any Body to serve; the Pressing in the House by Ministers; the interruption of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, though the liberty of it be declared a Fundamental Right; Practices upon Evidences, even to Blood by Promises and Threats, which are Boats and Bribes in the upright Sense of this Government; the general Complaint of sober Men, *Scotch-men*, of the Violation of the Conditions upon which they presented the King with the Crown of *Scotland*; and the *Wracking* of an *English-man* there, against the Laws of that Kingdom, as well as of this; and, it is said, by particular Orders from hence; last of all, the danger and scandal of our Administration in general, by the employment of incompetent Persons, such as are suspected of Falseness, or that are of known Insufficiency; as often as any free, or good Thing is proposed, they oppose it in pretence of upholding the Monarchy; and, as with this, they flatter the most dangerous and weak Part of this King; so if he comes to fail, they recommend themselves to King *James*, if he or his Son succeed, with the Merits of supporting the Crown against a Commonwealth: For these Reasons I am lead to say, if this be the

last opportunity for the King to be Victorious, it may be the last opportunity for us to be Free. The former Princes wanted not good Qualities, and were accessible upon all Occasions, and extremely Civil, as if they had a mind to live well with their People; but they had not Power to resist the evil Influences of some Men about them. And though this King shews great Magnanimity in the Field, he is Conquered daily in the Cabinet; And by whom, pray, more than by him that in the worst of Times was the worst of Tools? and to the eternal Infamy of this Government, is endured at the head of Affairs in a War against *France*, that was by the Commons of *England* Impeached upon Letters under his own Hand of a treacherous Negotiation with *France*; nor is this the blackest of his Crimes, and therefore not the grossest of our Follies to suffer him. His Capital Iniquity is, at once, subverting the Foundations of the People of *England*. It is *High Treason* to invade the Royal Bed, by the Laws of this Kingdom; But what is it then, or ought it to be to an House of Commons, to practise upon their Honour, to buy off the People's Representatives, to pervert Trust, and turn them against themselves? Next to them that took Money, he must be the worst of Men. This is *Treason* against the Constitution; it is a dissolving Fundamental Trust, and legally enthraling us; it is making the People, *Felo de se*, to destroy themselves. What Corruption so vile? What Prostitution so scandalous? It is beyond Example, and it seems it is above Punishment, and he is used, and looks, and acts; as if he were Meritorious. Shall an House of Commons endure this, and in a Government under the fair Character of a Reformation? As if we were reconciled to the Ministry and Measures, that were the Cause of making

king this bold Turn. This gives me all the Impressions of Grief and Pity, that with the Dog we should return to our Vomit, and like Swine feed upon Excrements. We offer our Enemies the greatest Advantages, while we let them see we can thus contradict, and give our selves the lye, and change our Minds of Men that are not changed; and can do any Thing to serve a turn, which makes the whole look Insincere and a Trick; and if it were not Impious, to be sure it were Unwise to do so.

These are the Motives that press me, and which make me so free and earnest with you, to value this last opportunity to all the Advantages, the great Wisdom of this House may draw thence, by a full Improvement of it. Let no respects divert you, as you will answer it to God and Man; I must be plain, it is a Bargain you must make for your All, make it sure; the omission seems to render it irretrievable. Let not ill Men and Management, cover it self under big Words against *France*. You know who cries stop Thief: Names should not colen you out of this happy Juncture, nor your Conduct shew you will be ever Prodigal of the Providences that would save you. Take the King's Advice, apply it wisely and quickly; he has been abroad, and has the Advantage of the *Confederates* Intelligence, as well as his own, which we have Reason to believe is very Good; and upon the whole Matter tells us, as the last and most important Motive to us, That we have but this opportunity: Be ready therefore with your Money, but be ready with your Rights too; and as wise Parliaments have ever done, let them have the Preference. I don't bid you ask why *Ireland* was not sooner reduced; why we had not above half as many Men as we have paid for, why Supplies were so long a going, and so many unnecessary

Ships for Tenders were chargeably continued, nor how much we are in Debt after the many Millions we have given, besides those the constant Revenue has yielded, some say, in all, above Fifteen; no, I will not be so ill natured or unreasonable, not a word of mine shall look towards Faction or Disaffection, but leave all this till last; if we prosper it will be time enough: I would not hinder Supplies by no means, only get into Possession of your antient Rights, your so much needed and essential Rights; and if it should please God the King should fail of his Hopes, or fall by his Enemies, you are in Possession, you have Ground to stand on worth defending, and that will secure you; for that it self will engage and unite all Interests, because their own is involved; we must not depend upon his Personal Success, but our own Constitutions; every one will stand up heartily for that which is his. Convince the Kingdom they are the better for the Change, or their heat will soon cool in supporting it; let them see their Legislation and Administration are secure; the first by annual Parliaments without any Evasion, and by free and genuine Elections, which cannot be without the Sheriffs are chosen by the County Courts, as the Coroners are, and that the Fines on them for false returns, and those that sit upon them be very heavy, and appropriated out of the reach of the Crown to remit, which will secure our Legislation; let Ministers be impeachable, and the Parliament sit till the Person accused be tried and acquitted, or punished; and all such Criminals be unpardonable and irretrievable, but at their Request: Provided always, That if any Minister be named, as Culpable by any Person in Parliament, he shall be obliged to make it good, or at least be dismiss'd the House, and made un-

incapable of any Employment in the Government; and regulate Tryals, as to the liberty of the Prisoner, the number and qualification of the Witnesses as well as Juries, after the manner of that Bill which is depending; and hereby our Administration will be in a good degree secured also.

I do further propose, That during this War a Committee of Lords and Commons be the Cabinet, and that they have the inspection of Navy, Army, and Treasury, and the recommending of all Officers employed in either Capacity, the Juncture calls for it. Were the King an Angel, he is not Omnipresent no more than Omnipotent; and if he wants your Power, he needs your Presence, Judgement, and Direction; a Common-wealth requires a *Dictator*, but a Monarchy the People in Parliament upon great Emergencies. Remember he is a K. of your making, and he should be one of your influencing, if not Ruling and Over-ruling in such Exigencies as ours. Favour or Connivance in Government, is for easie and not difficult Times: Judge well and Act vigorously, but Act so as to save your Selves, your Countrey I mean, whether this or the other K. prevails; for be assured if we are in Possession of our Rights, we are safe against this King's Victory, and King James's Return, that neither shall hurt us; else you will find your selves exposed to the ill Consequence, that may follow one or t'other: Have a care of after Games, especially now, when you are told you have but one opportunity for all. I cannot but urge that in your Ears, that you heard last from his Mouth, as the most pressing Motive to his Supply. All good Men are in pain for you, and particularly what part you act in this Affair, and the success it may have to the Felicity of the whole. God Almighty direct us, for all is at stake while both our Legislation and

Administration are unsettled, and all will be safe to us if we are secure at home; for it is feared, and justly, I think, that as our Saviour said, Our greatest Enemies are of our own House; our own Family, Men in Office, and in Government, let King James's Fate be your Admonition; trust your selves, and others shall not betray you; employ Men of Principles, of Skill, and Sobriety. For your Fleet you will find them better at *Ratcliff high-way*, than at *Locks* and the *Blue-posts*. For the Army, mix, with some that you have, honest Countrey Gentlemen and Citizens, that are both sober and hearty: And in every Commission see that you have only such Persons, as were bred up in the Business of those Commissions they serve in; as in the *Customs*, *Merchants*; in the *Excise*, those that have been *Brewers* and have given it over; in the *Admiralty*, *Navy*, and *Victualling Offices*, *Ancient Seamen* that have had good Commands, and known the providing of Stores for their own Ships; for whom these Employments should be reserved as honourable Retreats; and the Rewards of the Government to the aged and experienced, for their former good Services; who, for one half of the Revenue that is now paid, would bless themselves and you. Nor should our Council, or Cabinet, be without a *Seaman*, a *Souldier*, a *Merchant*, a *Civilian*, a *Common Lawyer*, and some *Countrey Gentlemen*, and such as have served long and well in *Embassies* abroad, which comprehends both Domestic and Foreign, Civil and Military Affairs. Remember that prudent and instructing Remarque of Sir William Temple, in his Account of Holland, *That though the People in general, were not as quick and witty as their Neighbours, yet their Government was generally wiser, because the wisest of the People governed; they choose*

choose and prefer the ablest, which for other Respects were advanced in Neighbouring Governments.

Would you be great or safe? Add to what we have said, the perusal of the Establishment by Land and Sea in the *Rump's* Time; observe by what Conduct so few, and most of them but of the middle sort of Men, became the Admiration and Terror of the *World*. Send for *H.* that was Treasurer of the Navy, and *B.* and *D.* that were Treasurers for the Army in *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, honest and able Men, and alive, and you will see that our yearly Charge exceeds both that of the Civil War, and War with *Holland* too, when *England* and *Scotland* had Armies to be paid, as well as *Ireland*. I say observe Proportion and Judge; whatever is wanting to ballance your greater Expences, is due to their better Conduct. Be not offended with me, but imitate and mend; the time invites us, and our Station obliges us to it, and the *Solemn League and Covenant*, I mean the King's Declaration, that Association for the Change; Shall it be waste Paper under it? God forbid; call for it, Settle and Rule by it; to be sure it is the *Original Contract* of our new Government. And unpardonable are they that after all our Blood and Treasure spilt and spent, (and we know not where they will stop,) shall out of Fear or Flattery lose the Advantages promis'd, for want of asking and pressing the Performance. I must put you in mind of one of them before we part, and that was *Sending back the Foreign Troops if you please*; And wont you please since *Ireland* is reduced? It is hoped you will; and disband our English ones too: What else are we the easier for *Ireland's* being reduced? Which we all suspected was prolonged on purpose to have a pretence for Money; And will you continue the Charge even now, when

they have not that pretence? Better Things are expected from you. I beg your Patience a little longer, we are an Island. *A Navy is an English standing Army*. Add 10 or 20 Sail of Ships, if you please, to the Establishment, but no more standing Armies now, I beseech you. Conquering of *France*, which some hot Heads dream of, is not our Business, if it were in our Power; and therefore must be the passion of Fools and hope of Women. It was never attempted but by *Ed 3.* and *H. n. 5.* Princes of great Minds and Sufficiency; but they rather shew'd *France* and the *World* what they could do, than what they could keep; and made the Experiment at the Expence of that Blood and Treasure, that we were the worse for our Glory, even while we could maintain it: But that failed us also at length, and we ever lost all back again, with more Dishonour than we got it with Reputation. We had need have the Spanish Mines, or the Philosopher's Stone, and a Race of Black Princes, and such *Edwards* and *Henrys*, to effect and support such an Enterprize. *France* is Three times as big as *England*, and Populous and Rich in Proportion; the Revenue of the Crown is one Third of the yearly Income of the whole; the Clergy have another Third, and the *Laitie* the other Third; of all which, the *New Converts* make not the Five hundredth Part, as they are not in Number the Two hundredth Man. Now if the French King hath more than the Revenue of all *England* to carry on his War, and a Clergy so Rich, and whom he has so much obliged to help him, and that will not let him want for so good a Cause, as they count this in favour of King *James*, that is an Exile for his and their Religion, besides what his People can furnish, zealous enough in their way, and very Bigots to him; to which vast Treasure add
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his incomparable Conduct, in Judgment, Secrecy, and Dispatch, suiting Men to Things, and both to Time and Place, with the Successes we see have followed him every where, as if he had Fortune in his Power. It shews him to be a *Much* for all his Enemies, and that they must think of being Defensive in their turn as well as he; and truly, *If he beats us when he fights, and fights but when he pleases, he will beat us at last*; and whatever we may fancy, France is Thrice more to us now, in Proportion, than what it was, which we do not or will not see, because old reckonings and present Heats cosen us. We are encreased in Trade and Shipping, so are they in Proportion, in Naval Affairs; in Revenue of the Crown; in Command and Discipline; they are Proportionably *Five to One* to what they were in *Ed. 3.* and *Hen. 5.* Time. It's true we might at first, with great Charge, have landed upon them and made some Confusion among them, as we might have reduc'd *Ireland*, and sav'd all this Blood and Treasure, but private Respects took place. However, that attempt upon *France* would have been too hazardous for wise Men to make; for besides the Repulse that might have followed; our Navy— might have been Wind bound, Provisions thereby wanted, and the Charge of an Army and Navy at first, would have come too fast, and been too much for the People to have understood; and if it had not succeeded to our mighty Hopes, it would have been a dangerous Slur upon the King, from whom some expected not so much as they have seen, and others a great deal more. Laying aside the Vanity of Conquests abroad, it will become us to have a care of them at home;

that while we think of nothing less than Freeing or Possessing other Countreys, we may not *Insensibly lose or enslave our own*. We have Land enough, and a free Government, if we might enjoy it. Our part is little more than Defensive; scower the Coast and you secure the Island and the Trade, which is the Life of it: But if after *Fifteen Millions* of Money already paid in Three years, (which, by the way, has not been known since the *Norman Dukes*, which is now above 600 years agoe,) you will give more without settling the Constitution and changeing Hands, and thereby purging the Administration, *We are undone as well as a ridiculous People*. The Army the King asks is for the *Continent*, and not an *Island*, And what have we to do there? Is not our *Quota* enough? Are any but the *Dutch* concerned in the Charge at *Sea*? And of that do we not bear a double Share? Besides, Have any of the *Confederacy* assisted us in the reducing of *Ireland*? Let us observe Proportion. But that which is both our surprise and trouble, is to find that his Majesty tells us of *Arrears*, after all that has been given, when it is made plain to us, that though we did the last year Proportion our Supplies to 70000 Men, there never were 50 of them in pay: Pray let that *Overplus* be applied to the *Arrears*, or those that received it obliged to refund to the Publick— We do not see to the end of our Charges, and cannot be too good *Husbands* for the People that pay it, who though they are and will be very reasonable, have often proved they are not made for Burthen. I will say no more to Persons of your *Talents*; nor had I said so much but to Men of your *Stations*.

